

Lishanid Noshan

Lishanid Noshan is a modern Jewish-Aramaic language, often called *Neo-Aramaic* or *Judeo-Aramaic*. It was originally spoken in northeastern Iraq, in the region of Arbil. Most speakers now live in Israel.

Lishanid Noshan means "the language of our people". Speakers often also call it **Lishana Didan**, which means 'our language'. However, as similar names are used by most of the dialects of Jewish Neo-Aramaic, scholarly sources tend to call it "Arbil Jewish Neo-Aramaic".

Other popular names for the language are *Hula'ula*, *Galigalu*, 'mine-yours' (noting the difference in grammar from other dialects), *Sureth* and *Kurdit*.

Contents
Origins
Phonology
Grammar
Word Order
Articles
Definite articles
Indefinite articles
Negation
Negative present copula
Negative past copula
Interrogative clauses
Prepositional case
Modern use
See also
References
External links

Origins

Various Neo-Aramaic dialects were spoken across a wide area from Lake Urmia to Lake Van (in Turkey), down to the plain of Nineveh (in Iraq) and back across to Sanandaj (in Iran again). Lishanid Noshan is quite central to this area (although normally termed a southwestern dialect).

Lishanid Noshan	
לִשְׁנַא דִּידַן, לִשְׁנִיד נִשְׁן <i>Lišānîd Nošān</i> , <i>Lišānā Dîdān</i>	
Pronunciation	[liʃɑˈnid noˈʃɑ]
Region	Jerusalem, originally from eastern and northern Iraq
<div>Native speakers</div>	(2,000 to 2,500 cited 1994) ^[1]
<div>Language family</div>	<div>Afro-Asiatic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Semitic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Central Semitic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Northwest Semitic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Aramaic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Eastern Aramaic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Northeastern<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lishanid Noshan</div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	aij
Glottolog	lish1245 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/lish1245) ^[2]

It is somewhat intelligible with the Jewish Neo-Aramaic languages of Hulaula (spoken to the east, in Iranian Kurdistan) and Lishan Didan (spoken to the north east, in Iranian Azerbaijan). It is also intelligible with Assyrian Neo-Aramaic spoken in the region.

However, it is quite unintelligible from Lishana Deni, the dialect that originally came from northwestern Iraq (Assyria). It is only since the 1980s that studies have shown the distinctiveness that separates Lishanid Noshan from Hulaula; before this time they were simply considered to be dialect clusters of the same essential language.

Phonology

Lishanid Noshan has 40 phonemes. 34 of them are consonants, and 6 of them are vowels. Laryngeals and pharyngeals originally found in Lishanid Noshan have not been preserved. In Aramaic, *ʕ, a voiced pharyngeal fricative is prominent in words. However, it has weakened in Lishanid Noshan to /ʔ/ or zero.^[3]

Regarding interdental fricatives, there has been a shift seen with **t* and **d*. **h*, the original unvoiced pharyngeal fricative, has fused with the velar fricative /x/ in Northeastern Neo-Aramaic dialects. This is not the case for Lishanid Noshan. **h* can still be seen in some words such as *dbh*, which means "to slaughter."^[3]

Word stress often occurs on the final syllable of stems of nominals and verbs.^[4]

Grammar

Word Order

Subjects in Lishanid Noshan often come before the verb when they are full nominals. The referent of subject nominals in this canonical order can be identified from the prior discourse or through assumed shared information between the speakers. Sometimes, it can also be used when the referent of the subject nominal has not been entered into the discourse yet and is not identifiable by the hearer.^[5]

ʔiyyá kābrá qimle.
This man got up.

Nominals that function as direct objects in verb clauses are normally positioned before the verb.^[6]

Articles

Definite articles

In Lishanid Noshan, *-ake* is the definite article. According to Khan, this affix is another sign of how Kurdish dialects have influenced this language; the Kurdish dialects have *-aka* for the direct case and *-akay* in the oblique case. When *-ake* is added to a noun, the singular and plural endings *-a* and *-e* are taken off.^[7]

Indefinite articles

Definiteness is expressed if the speaker assumes the hearer has background knowledge on the nominal being inserted into the conversation.^[8]

Negation

Regarding negative copular clauses, Lishanid Noshan differentiates constructions that use the negative present versus the negative past.

Negative present copula

Negative present copula is often inserted before or after the predicate. This particular copula usually contains the main stress of the intonation group. This phenomenon can happen in the middle of a predicate phrase.

ʔiyyá mewānid didi lewé?
Is he not my guest?^[9]

Negative past copula

This particular type of copular comes before the predicate in Lishanid Noshan very often. The main stress is inserted either on the predicate phrase or on *la*, the negator in Lishanid Noshan. Subject nominals are seen either before or after the copula.

lá-wela mga-làxxa'.
It was not like here.^[9]

Interrogative clauses

Interrogative clauses that can be answered with a yes or a no are differentiated from non-interrogative clauses solely by intonation. The yes-no type of interrogatives has an intonation pattern that rises in pitch where the main stress is; there is no drop in pitch in any of the syllables that come after the part where the main stress is.

gbát xa-čày?
Do you want a tea?

lā la-ǵzèlox mallá?
Have you not seen the mullah?^[10]

Prepositional case

Certain verbs in Lishanid Noshan mark their complement with the preposition *b-*.

badéniwa bi-xlulá.
They began the wedding.

tqèle-bbeu.
He pleaded with him.^[11]

Modern use

There are two major dialect clusters of Lishanid Noshan. The western cluster of dialects was centred on Arbil. Most of the Jews of Arbil itself spoke Arabic as their first language, and their Syriac-Aramaic was heavily influenced by Mesopotamian Arabic. *Dastit*, the language of the plain, is the Aramaic dialect of the villages of the Plain of Arbil. Lishanid Noshan was also spoken about 50 km north of Arbil, in the village of Dobe, with a dialect related to, but distinct from Arbili.

The eastern cluster of dialects was focused on the town of Koy Sanjaq in the mountains of northeastern Iraq (but not related to the Christian language of Koy Sanjaq Surat), with a slightly different subcluster further north, around the village of Ruwandiz. The dialects of the two clusters are intelligible to one another, and most of the differences are due to receiving loanwords from different languages: Arabic and Kurdish.

The verbal system of Lishanid Noshan is quite distinctive. Variations of it mark the boundaries of dialect clusters within the language. The Arbil dialect expresses the progressive aspect by prefixing the particle *la-* to the verb form (for example, *laqatil*, 'he is killing', and *laqtille*, 'he was killing', against *qatil*, 'he kills', and *qtille*, 'he killed'). The Dobe dialect does a similar thing, but uses the prefix *na-*. The eastern cluster dialects use non-finite forms of the verb with the copula to express the progressive aspect.

The upheavals in their traditional region after the First World War and the founding of the State of Israel led most of the Jews of Kurdistan to settle in the new Jewish homeland. However, uprooted from their homes, and thrown together with so many different language groups in the fledgling nation, Lishanid Noshan began to be replaced in the speech of younger generations by Modern Hebrew. Fewer than 3,000 people are known to speak Lishanid Noshan, and most of them are over 40 years old. The language faces extinction in the next few decades.

Lishanid Noshan is written in the Hebrew alphabet. Spelling tends to be highly phonetic, and elided letters are not written.

See also

- Aramaic alphabet
- Aramaic language
- Jewish languages
- Assyrian Neo-Aramaic
- Syriac language
- Syriac-Aramaic

References

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6. Khan (1999), p. 342.
 7. Khan (1999), p. 195.
 8. Khan (1999), p. 173.
 9. Khan (1999), p. 320.
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 11. Khan (1999), p. 299.
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 - Khan, Geoffrey (1999). *A Grammar of Neo-Aramaic: the dialect of the Jews of Arbel*. Leiden: EJ Brill. ISBN 9004115102.

External links

- Semitisches Tonarchiv – recordings of Lishanid Noshan from Koy Sanjak (http://semarch.uni-hd.de/dokumentgruppen.php4?ST_ID=5&DT_ID=124).
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